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**U.S. SENTENCES DRUG LORD OPERATING
ON LONG ISLAND TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that LUIS ROJAS, a Colombian drug trafficker who resided in Dix Hills, Long Island, New York, was sentenced in Manhattan federal court today to 30 years in prison for his role in overseeing the distribution of thousands of kilograms of cocaine in 2000 and 2001.

ROJAS, 47, pled guilty in March 2002 to one count of conspiracy to distribute at least 5 kilograms of cocaine. After a sentencing hearing, United States District Judge ALLEN G. SCHWARTZ found Rojas responsible for distributing approximately 2,900 kilograms of cocaine and also found that he possessed a gun in connection with his narcotics trafficking activities.

Evidence at the sentencing hearing demonstrated that

ROJAS supervised a narcotics organization that received thousands of kilograms of cocaine from sources in Mexico, and distributed this cocaine throughout the New York City area. According to testimony from one of ROJAS's workers, the organization received trucks loaded with up to more than 1,000 kilograms of cocaine at a highway rest area in New Jersey. At the rest area, ROJAS's associates would transfer the cocaine to a van. The drugs were then transported to a stash house, counted and delivered to ROJAS's customers.

ROJAS's worker also testified at the hearing that he personally delivered narcotics proceeds totaling approximately \$5 million to ROJAS's suburban residence in Dix Hills. In addition, the evidence at the hearing also established that ROJAS possessed a .9-millimeter handgun in connection with a kidnapping related to a drug debt ROJAS sought to collect.

ROJAS's March 2001 arrest stemmed from a year-long investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, which is comprised of special agents of the DEA, narcotics investigators of the New York State Police and narcotics detectives of the New York City Police Department.

As a result of the year-long investigation, which culminated with the seizure of more than \$1 million worth of cocaine in midtown Manhattan in March 2001, 17 other individuals

were arrested and have pled guilty to narcotics charges and/or federal robbery charges, including Gino Brunnetti, a Mexico-based narcotics trafficker responsible for supplying ROJAS with cocaine.

In imposing sentence Judge SCHWARTZ said: "I think that the record here amply demonstrates that Mr. LUIS ROJAS is a major drug trafficker who was responsible for massive quantities of cocaine."

Mr. COMEY praised the efforts of the DEA and the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force.

Assistant United States Attorneys JOSHUA A. LEVINE and ROBERTO FINZI are in charge of the prosecution, which is under the direction of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF") and the International Narcotics Trafficking ("INT") Unit of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

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